

REMARKS

Claims 1-8, 10, 11 and 13-16 are pending in this application. Claims 1-8, 10, 11 and 13-16 stand rejected. Reconsideration and allowance of the claims are requested in view of the following remarks.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-8, 10, 11, and 13-16 are rejected under §103(a) as being anticipated by US Pat. Pub. 2004/0196946 to Chao et al. (“Chao”) in view of US Pat. 6,404,437 to Russell et al. (“Russell”). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The Examiner alleges that Chao teaches all the limitation of claim 1 with the exception of a template, which is allegedly taught by Russell. Applicants respectfully submit that Chao, alone or in combination with Russell, fails to teach each and every element of claim 1. Chao teaches a computer-executed program that generates final fuel bundle positions within the core. Chao ¶¶ [0015], [0025]. Claim 1 recites a method of user assignment of fuel bundle characteristics with which fuel bundles potentially loaded into that position must comply.

To clarify, claim 1 does not recite generation of final fuel bundle positions for core reload; that is, individual fuel bundles are not selected for particular positions in the core. Rather, claim 1 assigns fuel bundle categories to particular core positions, thereby generating a template having these characteristics for each core position. Multiple fuel bundles may possess the characteristic, and thus claim 1 contemplates multiple fuel bundles potentially occupying that position for core reload. For example, if the input location characteristic is “fresh” as recited in claim 2, anywhere from one-third to one-half of the next cycle’s fuel bundles may occupy that location.

Further, Chao teaches only a computer program determining final positions. Claim 1 recites only user input to select position characteristics; no computer determinations are claimed. Thus Chao fails to disclose or fairly suggest each and every element of claim 1 or claim 16, which recites elements similar to claim 1.

Russell is limited in its teachings and fails to cure the deficiencies of Chao as described above. Specifically, Russell discloses nothing regarding user input of reload fuel bundle characteristics for particular core locations. Thus Chao, alone or in combination with Russell, cannot anticipate or render obvious claims 1 or 16. Claims 2-8, 10, 11 and 13-15, which are dependent from claim 1, are allowable at least for depending from an allowable base claim. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above remarks, the Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection has been addressed and overcome, placing the present application in condition for allowance. A notice to that effect is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

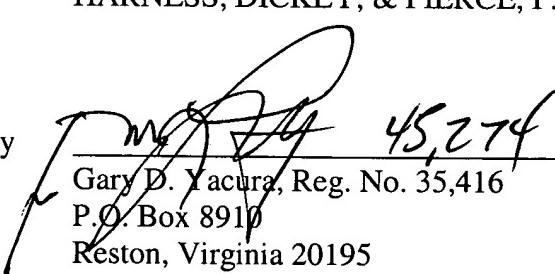
Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Gary D. Yacura at the telephone number of the undersigned below.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-0750 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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By


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